

## December 2010 PTSA Meeting

The December meeting was called to order at 9:30 by Jen Wastrom. In attendance were: Sheila Corr, Alice Smith, Arlene Darrow, Jen Wastrom, Mary Ellen O'Leary, Lauri Harder, Peggy Palmer, Anne Andrews, Jean B Tompkins, Margot Abrams, Susan Selleck, Cornelia Hurwitz, Pam Robey, Janine Johnson, Candy Wood, Wendy Malcy, Reghan Diaz. Alyssa Merrz, Melanie Glueck-Schloss and Lauren Ashton. From the Administration and Staff: Mr. Tom McMorrان, Ms. Gina Pin, Ms. Paula Panos, Mr. Jonathan Budd, Mr. Chris Poulos, Mr. Jordan Pinsky, Ms. Anne Kipp and Ms. MaryAnn Sheehy.

The November 2010 minutes were approved. (Andrews/Robey)

### OFFICERS REPORTS:

TREASURER: Mary Ellen O'Leary

1. The PTSA income tax return was timely filed.
2. An additional \$270 in membership fees and \$50 in buzz book advertisements were deposited in November. The PTSA combined membership/advertising income goals for the year have been met; thus, all programs listed in the proposed budget may go ahead as planned.
3. As of December 7, 2010, the PTSA had received \$625 in donations as a result of its "non-event" New Year's fundraiser.
4. **Proposed Motion:** (1st Hurwitz/2nd Robey/Passed by all)  
"The 2010-2011 Budget be and hereby is amended as follows: (a) the \$500 allocated to the line item "Donations" is re-allocated to the "PTSA Postage and Supplies" line item and (b) the line item "Parenting Events ERCC" is amended to read: "Parenting Events: ERCC and Adult Education." **Motion Passed** (1st Hurwitz/2nd Robey)

PRESIDENT: Jen reported on the 1st Annual Non-Event Fundraiser which was sent to every Barlow family. So far we have raised \$725 in just 12 days. Also, the PTSA along with an anonymous donor have contributed to funding the last blank mural panel in the auditorium. Jen then went over the proposed meeting topics for 2011:

- i. Standardized Testing/Revolution Prep: January
- ii. Roni-Cohen Sandler: February  
College 101 Panel: March
- iii. Prom Safety: April
- iv. Summer Enrichment Programs: May
- v. Year End Recap: June

HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORT: Mr. McMorrان gave a rapid fire report of happenings at JBHS:

- \* We had a fantastic Veteran's Day Celebration
- \* Dec 7th was Remembrance Day
- \* Administration is beginning to review contracts
- \* Meeting with AP teachers to determine demand
- \* Wants to expand Engineering Department
- \* Faculty has a meeting with lawyers about face book and "friending" between teachers and students
- \* "Baby project" is underway in grade 11 health
- \* Debate team continues to reign triumphant
- \* Mock Trial did very well but unfortunately did not win

- \* "The King and I" was a big success
- \* Winter Concert was a truly astonishing performance
- \* Twenty second sing-a-long is coming up, please come
- \* Dec 27th will be the holiday basketball tournament @ 6PM
- \* Sadly we lost 7 members of the Barlow community this year but we are very proud of the overwhelmingly supportive response from our community
- \* Still working on raising funds for the piano
- \* The Aldrich Museum in Ridgefield will be having a conversation of contemporary art led by many Barlow students who have been trained as docents

#### FACULTY REPORT: "Putting AP's in Perspective"

Ms. Kipp launched a discussion about the AP program. JBHS currently has 14 AP classes; it is mandatory that students take the AP exams at the conclusion of each class. We also have had some students at Barlow take independent AP courses on line. Ms. Kipp explained several different reasons a student may want to take an AP course. Mr. Budd spoke about AP English classes and told the group that there are 3 factors that may suggest a student take an AP class. They are knowledge, skill and habits (which is probably the most important). Mr. Pinsky spoke about AP Psychology and said that students benefit from taking AP classes as these classes are more challenging and very often the group is motivated to learn. When asked a few statistics we learned that approximately 195 different students took an AP class last year, about 1/2 the senior class takes AP classes and a little less than 1/2 of the junior class. Mr. McMorran said there is really no "proper number" of classes a student should take. It is important to balance it with overall wellness and student interest. Like a varsity sport, AP is on a varsity level of academics. He also said that teaching an AP class is intensely rewarding and intensely demanding for the teachers. It is an enormous commitment and we should be really proud of our AP teachers.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mini-Grants: Reghan Diaz introduced Mr. Poulos, a JBHS Spanish teacher who has been teaching at Barlow for 11 years and was CT Teacher of the Year in 2007. He presented the group with his mini grant proposal for a replica of a Diego Rivera mural for his classroom. Reghan then reviewed the following proposals:

#1

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WHO: Chris Poulos  
 AMOUNT: \$500.00  
 PROJECT: A 22 1/2' x 6' replica of a Diego Rivera mural on the back wall of his classroom.

#2

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WHO: Beth Bailey / Murals Club Advisor & Art Teacher  
 AMOUNT: \$54.00  
 PROJECT: Four plaques to give recognition to the students and the PTSA for their contributions to the murals that have been created by students and are currently hanging in the school.

#3

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WHO: Beth Bailey & Deb Taubner / Ceramics Teachers  
 AMOUNT: \$250.00  
 PROJECT: A ceramic tile mosaic in the design of a mandala to be permanently mounted on the exterior brick wall in the sanctuary courtyard.

#4

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WHO: Jen Desmarais and Mary Pat Hrebin / Recycling Club  
 AMOUNT: \$250.00

PROJECT: The purchase of additional recycling bins for the school.

#5

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WHO: S.A.D.D (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Club

AMOUNT: \$250.00

PROJECT: John Morello (I Am Dirt) to do a presentation on making good choices for our pre-prom assembly.

#6

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WHO: Maryanne Pieratti -- JBHS Social Work / Student Service Department

AMOUNT: \$250.00

PROJECT: To start a computer loan program, similar to the one we have developed with graphing calculators, for those students who are unable to afford computers.

In addition to the grants submitted to Reghan, the PTSA received a request for a mini-grant totaling \$94.88 from Mr. McMorrان. This represents the cost of three separate software packages providing instruction with respect to teaching in a block schedule. Candy Wood made a motion to move the dollar amount needed from the new Non-Event Fundraiser to cover the mini grant amount. Cornelia Hurwitz/2nd, **motion approved**. Candy Wood made a motion to accept all mini grants as proposed. Alice Smith/ 2nd, **motion approved**. Jen Wastrom was thrilled that the PTSA could support all the requests and said it was her very favorite day as PTSA president!

Arts Foundation: Phyllis Wasko. No report

Beautification Committee: Margot Abrams said they have met with Dr. Nuzzo and Dr. Waterman and have started working with some students to identify plants so that they are sure to get the right ones for the sanctuary.

Caring Committee: Jean B Tompkins said, "since the Caring Committee is new this year to Barlow she would like to identify the two different aspects of the committee. One is to help Barlow families in crisis by providing meals on a temporary basis and the other is to acknowledge happy milestones of the Barlow Staff members. The very minimum, we would like to send a card to say PTSA cares and we are here, please reach out to us. I'll be the contact for requests and notifications and I want to assure you that I monitor my email 24/7. This past week the Caring Committee provided food at the funeral reception for a Redding family, where the father tragically died in a car accident. I want to thank the Caring Committee members who were wonderful by donating and delivering food for the reception. Thank you for your generosity and kindness. As this new committee gains legs I would like to ask everyone to help spread the word about us and to ask those who might be interested in helping to please sign up on the far table. Know that we are only an email or phone call away, please contact me if we can be of assistance to your family."

Focus Newsletter: Lisa DeVoto. Next Focus will be coming out in January

Hospitality-Open House: Peggy Palmer. No report

Membership/Buzz Book: Joey Davey, Sharon Gianicchi, Laurie Stone. No report

Post Prom: Candy Wood McAdam said they are still in the early stages and they will send out requests after the holidays.

PTA Council: Kim Breda emailed the following report: "The Easton-Redding PTA Council shall no longer be considered a committee of the Barlow PTSA. But, PTA Council president, Kim Breda, respectfully requests that council meetings continue to be hosted by the JBHS PTSA at Barlow, and that at least one PTSA member attend each meeting. Meetings occur approximately every other month. Thank you." The next PTA Council meeting will occur either January or February, with guest Dr. Michael Cicchetti speaking and answering questions.

PTSA Listserve: Anne Andrews created the following guidelines as a way of organizing the barrage of announcements sent to the PTSA for publicity purposes. The JBHS PTSA will send 2 general announcements each month - one immediately prior to the PTSA meeting and one at a later time during the month. See the schedule below. All outside requests for information to be included in the list serv announcement must be aware of this deadline. Only under extenuating circumstances will the PTSA use the listserv for other announcements. The tentative dates for the listserv is as follows: Friday December 10<sup>th</sup>; Monday Dec 20<sup>th</sup>; Friday Jan 7<sup>th</sup>; Friday Jan 21<sup>st</sup>; Friday Feb 4<sup>th</sup>; Monday Feb 14<sup>th</sup>; Friday Mar 11<sup>th</sup>; Friday March 25<sup>th</sup>; Friday April 8<sup>th</sup>; Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup>; Friday May 6<sup>th</sup>; Friday May 20<sup>th</sup>; Friday June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Publicity: Jen Wastrom. No report

Reflections: Claire-Ann Meskers. Deadline is the beginning of January

Senior Luncheon: Peggy Palmer and Kim Ryan. No report

Staff Appreciation Luncheons: Steph Belleveau and Candy Wood McAdam said the first requests are presently going out. The date of the luncheon is January 20th and the theme this year is "International."

Transition Advisory Committee: Colleen Joyce. No report

Volunteer Coordinator: Arlene Darrow and Joan Winter. No report

NEW BUSINESS: Pamela Aris spoke to the group about the current legislation regarding "Water for the World Act" that was initiated by the late Paul Simon. It has passed in the Senate and is going to the House where it is not expected to pass as easily. She would like Barlow students and parents to get the word out to contact their state representative and ask them to vote "yes."

Paula Panos reminded the group that PSAT results would be reviewed at Barlow tomorrow night at 7PM in the LGI. All sophomore and juniors as well as their families are invited to attend.

PROGRAM: Margot Abrams "Holiday Enhancement...That Even a Stressed Out Parent Can Find Time To Do." Margot had several beautiful arrangements and she showed the group how to create them starting with things that we all have at home as well as identifying some native plants. She went over tools that could be used, like skewers, ribbons and bows, lights, charms and jewels, fruits and vegetables as well as the latest things to add for a fantastic display. She showed us how to make an arrangement that could be used at Thanksgiving and carried over to the winter holidays. A raffle was held at the end of the presentation and several ladies went home with an arrangement for the holidays.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00. The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 11th and the presentation will be "Parents guide to Standardized Testing: Which, What, When, How???"

Respectfully submitted,

Lauri Harder  
Recording Secretary